

Quieting the soul

A few years ago, I visited a primary school in India where I had the chance to hear the prayers of small children. In that cramped, overheated room, surrounded by tiny voices reaching out to God, my own prayer life was humbled. Every so often, the prayers themselves were punctuated by moments of genuine silence. I realized in that moment that it was not just empty silence, but silence with a purpose; silence to genuinely listen to what God was saying in response.

It was an experience I will never forget.

Throughout the year, our lives have a way of being overrun by the cacophony of tasks, deadlines and meetings. Summer on the other hand, has a way of quieting our hearts. Time away from work, time spent outdoors or even just more added sunlight to our day are all potential gifts of quiet, peace and stillness.

In many ways, Jesus is our best example of the importance of time spent in silence for a purpose. Many times throughout the Gospels we are told of His retreat away from crowds in order to pray and quiet His mind. In the night leading up to His death, Christ took the time to commune with the Father in silence and in solitude.

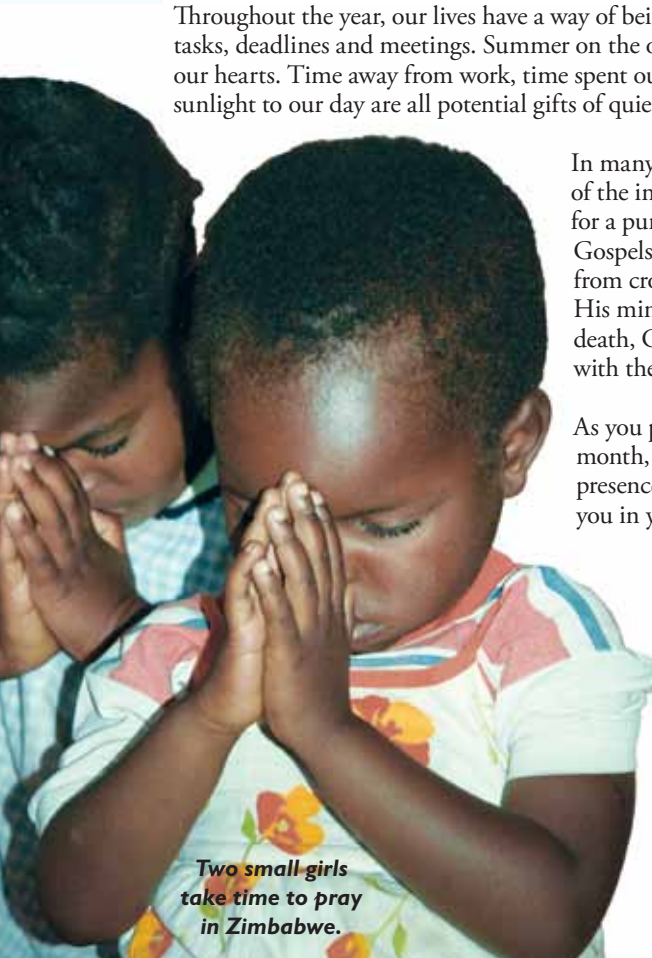
As you pray through the requests this month, take some time to just be in the presence of God. What is God saying to you in your quiet moments?

Thank you for praying with me.



Dave Toycen

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters. —Psalm 23:2



Two small girls take time to pray in Zimbabwe.

Niger

Niger is now in the grips of a devastating food crisis caused by very poor or failed harvests in the last year. Up to 7.8 million people, nearly 60 per cent of the population, are now not able to find enough food for themselves. Families have to leave their homes in search of food for their children and livestock. In many cases they are relying on just one meal a day. It is estimated that nearly 1.5 million children under the age of five will be registered as suffering from some type of malnutrition in the next 12 months if the situation does not change.

World Vision is already responding by re-stocking village cereal banks, providing medicine and therapeutic food to treat malnourished children in their communities, and distributing seeds to ensure that future harvests will be productive.

Pray for families who have lost harvests and livestock and are struggling to find ways to survive. Pray that emergency food will reach the most vulnerable.

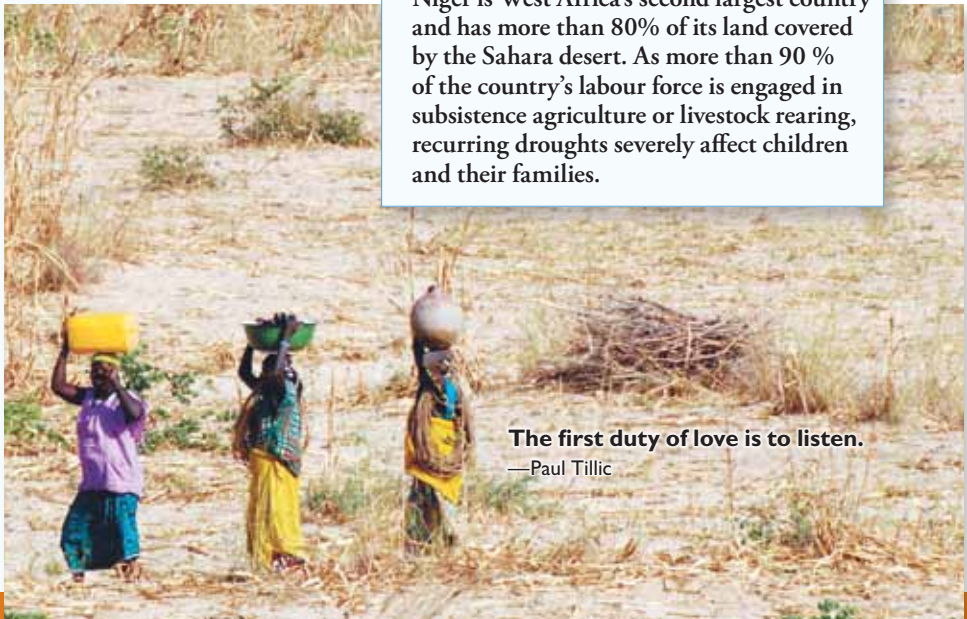
Pray for lifesaving therapeutic food and medicine, that it will reach malnourished children quickly.

Pray for World Vision Niger's Emergency Relief Team. Pray that they obtain the resources needed to respond in communities affected by the food crisis. Pray that necessary staff can be identified to support the response.

Pray for the Government of Niger, that it continues to be open to the support of non-governmental organizations so that lifesaving projects can continue.

Country Quick Fact:

Niger is West Africa's second largest country and has more than 80% of its land covered by the Sahara desert. As more than 90 % of the country's labour force is engaged in subsistence agriculture or livestock rearing, recurring droughts severely affect children and their families.

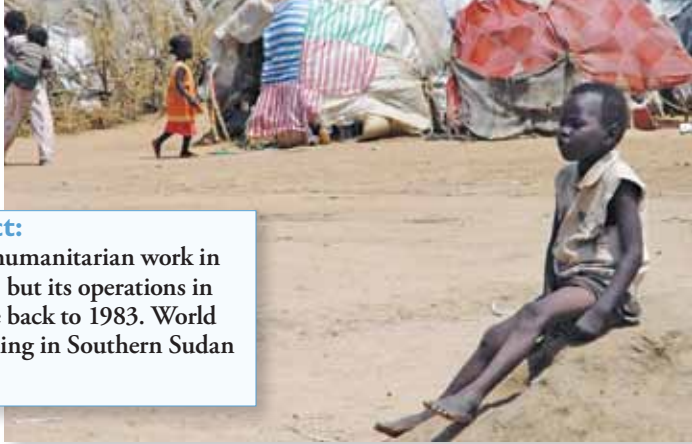


The first duty of love is to listen.

—Paul Tillic

Sudan

Sudan is Africa's largest country at almost half the size as western Europe. Poor infrastructure, continuing conflict and massive war-displaced populations have undermined development and significantly affected children and their communities in various parts of the country.



Country Quick Fact:

World Vision began humanitarian work in Darfur in June 2004, but its operations in Northern Sudan date back to 1983. World Vision has been working in Southern Sudan since 1989.

In 2005, Sudan emerged from more than 20 years of civil conflict between the north and the south following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. At times, many have feared that the agreement would not last but thankfully, it seems to be holding so far. One of the most important elements of the accord is a national referendum to be held next year to decide if Southern Sudan will become its own country.

Elections this past April were closely watched by the international community. Although the results have been disputed by many and the voting seen as chaotic, a new government has formed.

Pray for stability. If the referendum in 2011 is postponed, it could easily lead to another armed conflict between the north and the south.

Pray for international staff that continue to put their lives at risk to serve the people of Sudan both in the north and the south. There have been many incidents of hostage taking over the past few years although thankfully most have ended with the peaceful and safe return of the aid workers.

Pray for children and families caught in the middle of the conflict. Many southerners were displaced into northern Sudan during the conflict and have yet to return home due to fears of recurring violence.

Pray for political, religious and ethnic leaders. Pray for wisdom and courage to seek peace above personal gain.

Pray for the Christian church as it seeks to demonstrate the love of Jesus.

China

Almost three months exactly to the day of the earthquake in Haiti, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake rocked Qinghai Province, a remote area of western China. More than 2,200 people were killed and over 12,000 people injured. At least 15,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, affecting well over 100,000 people. Immediate accessibility to the area was made quite difficult because of damaged roads but assessment teams were on the ground within a matter of days.

World Vision has so far provided quilts, hygiene kits, bags of flour and noodles to affected families. Although World Vision did not have programs in this area at the time of the quake, the emergency response team reacted immediately and is hoping to reach more than 60,000 people through relief supplies.

Pray for families who have lost all of their possessions and must begin again.

Pray for children and their families who have lost loved ones and are still processing the trauma of such a large-scale earthquake.

Pray for those working in the clean up and rebuilding process.

Pray for continued peace in the region. The area is semi-autonomous and the entry of the Chinese military could have been an opportunity for unrest. Thankfully people are working together and grateful for the support during this difficult time.



Country Quick Fact:

World Vision first began working in China in 1982. The area devastated by the quake is more than 4,000 metres above sea level, posing many challenges to aid workers including altitude sickness as they work to provide lifesaving supplies to children and their families.

Keep Praying

Chile

Pray for continued cleaning and rebuilding efforts. Chile experiences its coldest season when we experience our warmest and families need to be sheltered against the weather. More than 20,000 homes still need to be rebuilt in order for all of the displaced families to be housed. According to the government's assessments, the February 27 earthquake damaged 79 hospitals, 370,000 homes, 4,012 schools and 1,555 kilometres of roads making this the worst catastrophe in Chilean history.



We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence.... We need silence to be able to touch souls. —Mother Teresa

Haiti

Pray for children and their families who keep being retraumatized by significant aftershocks. Months after the disaster, tremors can still be felt in Port-au-Prince, often sending people screaming from buildings in anticipation of another devastating quake. Pray for workers preparing land for transitional shelters as thousands of displaced families wait for permanent resettlement. Pray that the hurricane season will not affect Haiti as increased rain would inevitably bring an increase in disease and despair.



Afghanistan

Pray for pregnant women in a country with limited health care and medical infrastructure. Shockingly, one in eight women dies in childbirth in this large south-Asian country and most have to deliver their babies without any knowledgeable birth attendant present.



Country Quick Fact:

Afghanistan is one of the 30 high priority countries where child deaths are most prevalent, with one-in-four children in Afghanistan dying before he or she reaches age five. More than 24,000 children die each day from preventable causes such as diarrhea and malaria. World Vision believes that preventable child deaths are the greatest child rights violation of our time and has launched a campaign to raise awareness about this inequality—visit fivefor5.ca for more information.

Answer to Prayer

Expect to have hope rekindled. Expect your prayers to be answered in wondrous ways. The dry seasons in life do not last. The spring rains will come again. —Sarah Ban Breathnach

Praise God for the genuine dialogue at the G8 and G20 summits around child and maternal health. With nearly nine million children dying each year due to preventable diseases, and more than 350,000 women dying due to complications of pregnancy or delivery, Canada's decision to make child and maternal health the cornerstone development issue was the right decision. We continue to pray that pledges made by these countries will in fact be realized in funding to save the lives of countless women and children.

Praise God that elections in Sudan and Ethiopia only had limited effects on ongoing development work across both countries. Although the elections results are disputed by some, we thank God that violence and rioting have not overtaken the countries.



Praise God for innovative programming that will see many displaced families in Port-au-Prince reunited with their relatives here in Canada. The Haiti Resettlement Project will help Haitian refugees adapt to their new life in Montreal, QC, and support them as they start to rebuild their lives and their futures.

Praise God for continued good news out of northern Sri Lanka. Families are rebuilding their lives after decades of civil war. World Vision has helped returned fishermen with boats and fishing tools in order for them to be able to provide for their children and continue the difficult task of reconstruction.

Sometimes the answer to prayer is not that it changes life, but that it changes you.

—James Dillet Freeman

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Web sites to visit: www.worldvision.ca/resources (print and video resources)
www.worldvision.ca/prayerletter (access prayer letter online)

To subscribe to the prayer letter or to send it to a friend, call **1 800 268-1650**

The President's Prayer Team is a quarterly prayer update from Dave Toycen, President of World Vision Canada.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.